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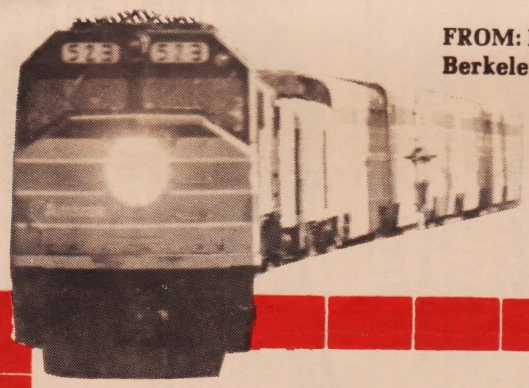

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"There may have been a time when Westway was a laudable idea, with its underground highway, 93 acres of parkland and other special features. Yet now, the growing evidence suggests that it could in a short time become a millstone on the taxpayer's back--and that it is a risk that should not be taken at a time when the Reagan Administration is drastically cutting aid to local governments."

--Sydney H. Schanberg in New York Times, July 21.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"But Jack Gilstrap, xecutive directr of the American Public Transit Association, the transit industry's group in Washington, said, 'we're pleased' with the new rules, because they switch the emphasis 'fro accessibility to mobility' and 'away from a feeral mandate.'

"The inerim regulations will remain in effect wile the Transportation department goes trougha formal procedure aimed at developing permanent new rules. The administration had proposed legislation to scrap the 1979 rules, bt that proposal still is pending in Congres.

"The regulations being supplanted would require that major subway and commuter-rail stations be efitted over 30 years with elevators and other facilities for the wheelchair-bound; that buses bought after July 2, 1979, have a ift, with half of each fleet to be equipped with lifts after10 years, and that subway cars acquired after July 2, 1979, and commuter-rail cars bought after Jan. 1, 1983, be made acessible to wheelchair users."

--Wall Street Journal (San Francisco edition), July 17.

(It's a feeral mandate that's too ifty.)

LETTERS

(To DOT Secretary Drew Lewis:)

Settlement of the air controllers' demands will be paid by the Federal Government. The public has the right to know the entire $2.5-BILLION ANNUAL cost of air traffic control is paid by the government and not the airlines. Air traffic control is the airline signal system and as such constitutes a hefty subsidy to the airlines. Though air traffic control is but half the annual subsidy the airlines enjoy, that item alone is three times the Amtrak subsidy. Yet you cackle continuously that only Amtrak is subsidized.

You just can't wait to build "Westway" in New York City, a project whose final cost will doubtless exceed $2-BILLION for less than four miles of roadway. This expenditure would give us a nationwide Amtrak for more than two years. Yet you babble brainlessly that only Amtrak sups at the public trough. My, how your anti-passenger train bias shows.

The truth of the matter is each and every year airlines enjoy a $5-BILLION largesse and the highway users enjoy over $16-BILLION from three tiers of government. Yet you try to con people into believing only Amtrak is "subsidized." What gives?

Then the other big "Lewis Lie" that "no one rides Amtrak." Friends just returned from a cross-country trip, and I just returned from a Florida vacation. We all rode full trains. Perhaps when you say "no one" rides that is your snobbish way of declaring people who don't travel in Rolls Royces or 14-karat yachts are "nobodies." Caught in that one, you next tried to have Amtrak priced out of the market to prove your point. Liar!!

William R. Wright
Cranford, New Jersey

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ON THE COVER

Each of the twenty F-40 engines on our cover represents five percent of the Amtrak system. Thus the three engines in red show graphically the 15 percent of the system that Amtrak says it must cut back under its new budget. In this issue we bring the latest news on Amtrak's attempts to perform the least painful surgery on itself.

I am certainly sympathetic to Ted and Sylvia Blishak's concern over the proposed downgrading of all Amtrak dining cars. However, I am not of the opinion that the downgrading of this service is as threatening to Amtrak ridership as the Blishaks and many railfans think...

Amtrak does not serve a prestige clientele. Most Amtrak patrons are coach passengers who are accustomed to Greyhounds rather than the streamliners of yesteryear. These riders are pleased that there is ANY food service aboard a train. They have never heard of the TWENTIETH CENTURY LIMITED and if this were 1950 they would not be riding it. Many of these people are intimidated by the formality of the dining car and most prefer hamburgers, sandwiches and potato chips to three-course meals on china plates. It is true that the five or ten percent of Amtrak's patrons who know and expect better will not tolerate this atmosphere. For this minority I propose adopting one of the proposals that Ted and Sylvia Blishak mentioned (last issue): the tasteful serving (preferably on real plates with metal utensils) of high quality airline-style meals in sleeping car rooms. This type of superior room service would enable Amtrak to retain its first class ridership while effectively cutting costs. Do other RTN readers agree with me?

Christopher Anderson
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

...There is no doubt that the food service offered on several trains is terrible. The TV dinners, as crew and Amtrak officers alike call them, are just plain bad. However, I thought that Mr. Boyd was putting them in to reduce costs because he wanted to. I thought that he was in favor of the rule that required that 100% of the cost of food and beverages be covered. According to the (Blishaks') article it's a trick by Stockman and therefore Reagan to destroy Amtrak. But if that's the case, then why isn't Boyd yelling about it? Why isn't he calling on NARP and his friendly Congressmen to help? Why is he blindly going ahead with this plan? Or is he being sly as a fox?--taking a risk that while he might lost a few customers, the outcry of this horrible food service will be so great as to force Congress to remove the requirement?...

H. Martin Swan
St. Paul, Minnesota

I would like to take exception to the Florida reader (RTN #225). Altho there have been incidents of lateness (with the Florida trains), the overall average has been far better than last summer. (I live within sight of both ACL and SAL mains, and see all passenger trains every day.) One major delay for about three days was due to a Conrail freight derailment north of Washington. Trains 87/88 and 97/98 have experienced problems with the HEP unit on an F-40 engine (I think it was either 333 or 335) and this has caused them to run late.

It is my understanding that the faulty F-40 was returned to EMD to try to rectify the problem. At any rate, it hasn't been seen down here in several weeks. The equipment that was derailed at Lochloosa was only cosmetically damaged and is now back in service.

Ramon Davis
Auburndale, Florida

★ AMTRAK BOARD VOTING ON FINAL SYSTEM CUTS

Amtrak said that the final adjustments to the system, in order to economize and remain within the Reagan budget, would be voted upon by its Board of Directors at their monthly meeting on Aug 26. Since this issue is going to press before that date, we will not know for sure the outcome of the voting as we complete these lines, and Amtrak is being very secretive about this matter. However, one report leaked from Amtrak indicates that there will be only three cuts made in the system: the SHENANDOAH, the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and one leg (presumably the San Antonio-Laredo leg) of the INTER-AMERICAN are to be discontinued.

Up until about Aug 17 there were reports (believed authentic) that the SUNSET LIMITED would be dropped, and in its place a day train from Los Angeles to Tucson and possibly an extension of the CRESCENT to Houston would be added. Then Amtrak spokesmen suddenly reported that all that was abolished, and the SUNSET would be kept.

In addition to the cuts named above, it is still believed that the Chicago-Minneapolis portion of the NORTH STAR may be dropped.

An internal Amtrak memo earlier in August proposed discontinuing the CARDINAL east of Cincinnati, dropping the SHENANDOAH, dropping the NORTH STAR between Chicago and Minneapolis, dropping the INTER-AMERICAN south of St. Louis while running thru cars from the SOUTHWEST LIMITED Newton-Fort Worth-San Antonio, dropping the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL, operating the CRESCENT as a day train only as far south as Atlanta, re-routing the BROADWAY LIMITED via Cumberland, running a Portland section of the EMPIRE BUILDER from Spokane to Portland via SP&S or UP, initiating a Chicago-Grand Rapids 403-b service, dropping the BLACK HAWK, and initiating the L.A.-Tucson day train. The L.A.-Tucson train would have left L.A. at 10am, making stops in Ontario, Loma Linda, West Palm Springs, Indio, Niland, Yuma, Phoenix and Mesa. Evidently now the plan proposed in that memo is mostly superseded.

★ AUTO-TRAIN SERVICE GETS A NEW BEGINNING

The Auto-Train operation is to be re-started, under a different name, by a group of Northeastern investors operating under the name Virginia and Florida Railroad (that will not be the name of the operation, which hasn't been announced yet). The group, headed by former Penn Central president William H. Moore, is reported negotiating for the purchase of Auto-Train's terminals in Lorton VA and Sanford FL. They are hoping for an Oct 1 startup of service along that route, and are negotiating with the Seaboard Coast Line for track use. A spokesman for the group told reporters that operation might be less frequent than the original Auto-Train, especially in the off-season. There will be some other economies in operation: for example, passengers will be served food at their seats rather than in a dining car. The group hopes to acquire better equipment than Auto-Train had. All Auto-Train passenger cars are still sitting in Sanford, where they were left last May when the corporation went bankrupt. Several E locomotives that were formerly leased to Auto-Train, and were moved to Hialeah after Auto-Train shut down, have been sent north recently, and it is believed that they have been sold to the Alaska Railroad, and will be equipped with head end power before going to Alaska. It is reported that the new operators want to buy the equipment now used on Amtrak's SILVER STAR, and will have it converted to head end power at Amtrak's Beech Grove facility.

★ 1990: A SCENARIO FOR AMTRAK SUCCESS ★
by Ronald C. Sheck

The following is excerpted from a longer research study of Amtrak being performed by Professor Sheck. This study looks ahead at Amtrak over about the next ten years and projects what our national rail passenger system could be if plans are rationally and thoughtfully made and carried out without obstructionism. This study was sponsored by the New Mexico Congressional delegation, and an Executive Summary of the work, about 20 pages long, should be ready by the time this issue of RTN is published. A copy will be available free of charge by writing Director, Arts and Sciences Research Center, Box RC, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces NM 88003 and requesting it by author and title (title is: Amtrak 90: A Route to Success, Executive Summary). Ronald C. Sheck is Associate Professor of Geography and Planning at New Mexico State University. Exactly six years ago we published a summary of Prof. Sheck's Amtrak 80 plan, in RTN #113.

This three-year study of Amtrak projects an entirely new, upbeat future for America's rail passenger system. The major emphasis is upon increasing revenue at a faster rate than costs until a break-even point is reached in Fiscal Year 1988 and subsequent years show a growing profit that will cover capital as well as operating costs.

Increases in revenue result from increased ridership and fare increases that keep pace with inflation. The growth in ridership results from a three phase strategy to be phased in over the first five years of the plan.

Phase 1. Increase capacity on existing trains by placing more cars on each train to meet demand.

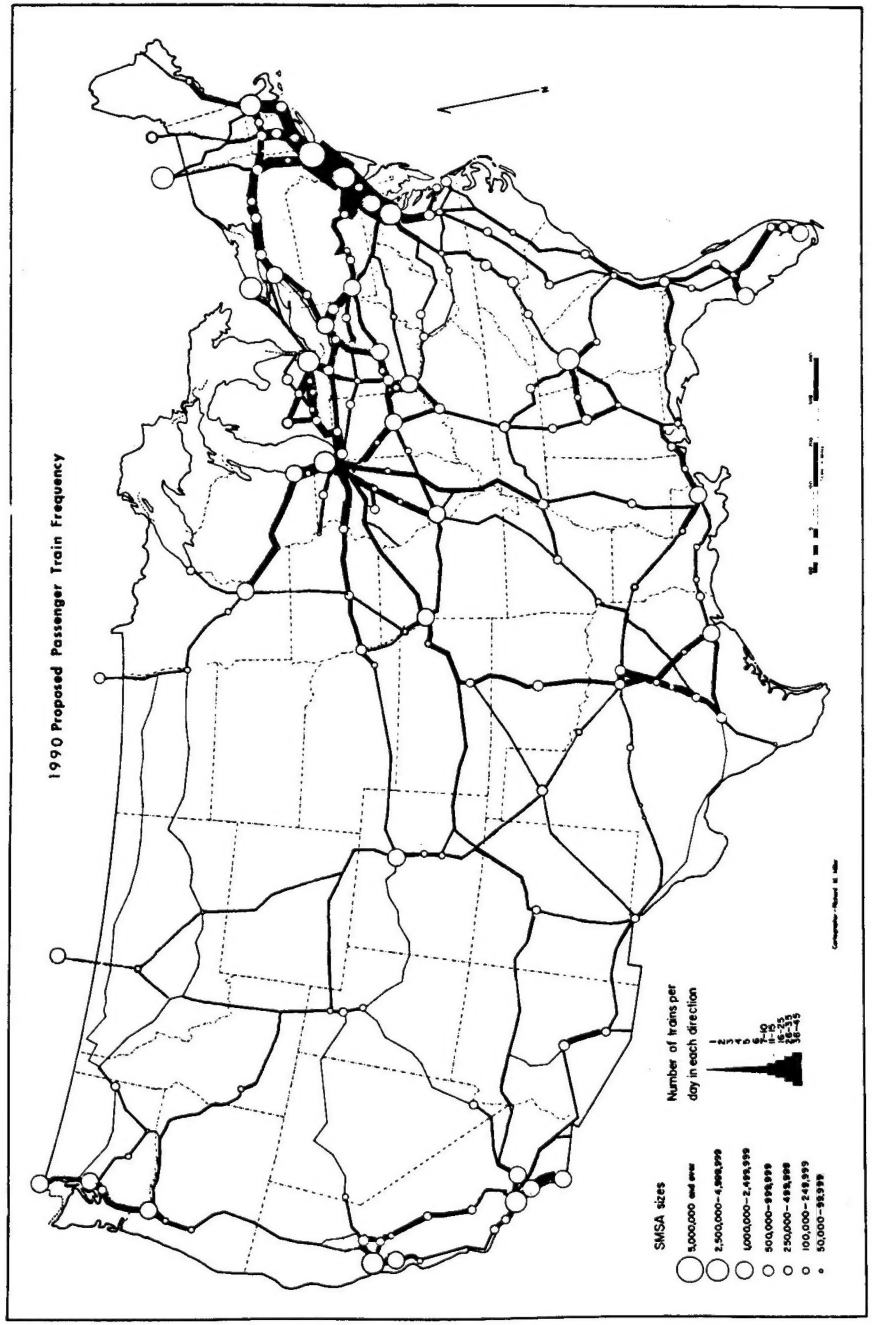
Phase 2. Place additional trains on the existing network, concentrating on those segments showing the greatest growth potential. Timing and sequencing of this element is crucial to maximizing the benefits of existing physical plant.

Phase 3. Development of new routes that connect existing terminals on the system. This will increase the number of destination and route choices for potential rail travelers while once again making good use of the already in-place terminal and servicing facilities.

In order to provide the capacity to implement this strategy and maximize Amtrak's market potential it will be necessary to continue capital investments at current, or slightly higher, levels for the next several years. Some 500-700 older cars currently out of use will be rehabilitated and converted to electric heating and air-conditioning in the first three years. Orders must be placed in FY 1982 for additional new passenger equipment to supplement the present Superliner bi-level cars used on western trains and provide for additional growth on eastern routes. A production level of 200-250 cars a year must be maintained over the next decade. An order of this magnitude would be sufficient to attract an American car builder into production, would provide lower unit costs per car, create several thousand new jobs and have positive ripple effects in increasing employment in many supply industries.

Cost reductions will be achieved through greater labor productivity. Outmoded work rules must be changed and would be beneficial not only to Amtrak's financial performance but would lead to about 46,000 new passenger train jobs by 1990.

Cooperative ventures must be pursued with other modes of transportation (bus, air, taxi, limousine, tour operators, urban transit, car rental, etc.) in developing joint terminals and interline ticketing and baggage transfer agreements. Benefits to all operators can accrue from this approach and the consumer will find public transportation a much more attractive option.



Projected Financial Performance--Fiscal Year 1982 through Fiscal Year 1990

Fiscal Year	Revenue ($ millions)	Revenue as per-cent of costs	Subsidy ($ millions)	Operating Costs ($ millions)	Capital ($ millions)	Total Federal Costs ($ millions)
1982	720	50	720	1,440	250	970
1983	912	57	698	1,610	275	973
1984	1,236	65	663	1,899	315	978
1985	1,716	75	542	2,258	350	892
1986	2,220	84	415	2,653	350	765
1987	2,896	93	234	3,130	350	584
1988	3,754	98	39	3,793	350	389
1989	4,504	103	0[1]	4,352	250	250
1990	5,304	105	0[1]	5,004	100	100

1. In FY 1989 a profit of $198 million is projected and in FY 1990 this increases to $300 million. In the initial years of profitability these funds will be reinvested in additional capital expenditures thereby reducing the total cost to the federal government even more.

Notes: Ridership levels are expected to increase from about 22 million passengers in 1981 to 53 million in 1985 with only minor adjustments in the existing network. Further growth to a 1990 level of close to 124 million is expected to be related in part to route expansion which will minimize capital investments in new facilities by taking advantage of existing terminals and servicing facilities. The present subsidy per passenger therefore would drop from the present $32.72 in FY 1982 to $10.22 in FY 1985 and disappear altogether after FY 1988.

The projections are consistent with Reagan Administration proposals for urban mass transit funding which consider a phase out of operating subsidies although over a shorter time frame. While the Administration proposals are to continue capital funding for mass transit in urban areas "Amtrak 90" suggests a profitability level can be attained for intercity rail passenger service which will also cover capital costs as well by the early 1990s.

Specific Improvements for New Mexico

FY 1982 Sunset Limited between Los Angeles and New Orleans via Phoenix, Tucson, Lordsburg, Deming, El Paso, San Antonio, and Houston changes from tri-weekly to daily beginning in June 1982.

FY 1984 Coronado, a new train providing north-south service connecting three major east-west Amtrak routes will be introduced in June 1984 between Denver and El Paso serving Raton, Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, Belen, Soccorro, Las Cruces.

Southwest Limited. Through sleeping cars and coaches will be introduced between Chicago and Phoenix and Tucson. This will provide direct service from northern New Mexico points (Raton, Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, Grants and Gallup) to southern Arizona. This service will be introduced in December 1983.

FY 1985 Rocky Mountain Auto Carrier. A new passenger and automobile carrying train will be introduced from the Chicago area (loading cars at Joliet and Galesburg) to Colorado and northern New Mexico points. The train will be introduced in June 1985 and will operate initially tri-weekly.

FY 1986 Sunset Limited. Introduction of a new section of this train east of El Paso providing direct connections between Los Angeles, Phoenix, Tucson, Lordsburg, Deming and El Paso via Midland, Odessa, Abeline and Ft. Worth to Dallas.

Golden State Limited. A new train operating from Los Angeles to Chicago via Phoenix, Tucson, Lordsburg, Deming, El Paso, Alamogordo, Carrizozo, Vaughn, Ft. Sumner, Clovis, Amarillo, Wichita, Topeka, Kansas City to Chicago. This train would be inagurated in November 1985.

Navajo. A daytime train operating Tucson to Albuquerque via Phoenix, Williams, Flagstaff, Winslow, Gallup and Grants. Through cars would operated to and from Denver on the Coronado. Introduced in November 1985.

FY 1987 Trailblazer. A second train on the existing Southwest Limited route between Chicago and Los Angeles via Raton, Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, Grants and Gallup. Through cars between Denver and Los Angeles would be handled westbound on the Cororado and eastbound on the Sangre de Cristo. Introduced in June 1987.

Sangre de Cristo. A daytime train between Albuquerque and Denver via Lamy, Las Vegas, Raton, Trinidad, Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Would carry through cars eastbound between Los Angeles and Denver from the Trailblazer. Indroduced in June 1987.

Yellow Rose. A Denver to Dallas train cutting across norteastern New Mexico between Trinidad and Amarillo with a stop in Clayton. This train would be combined with the Coronado north of Trinidad. Introduced in June 1987.

FY 1988 De Onate. A second train on the Albuquerque-El Paso route connecting with a second overnight train between El Paso and Ft. Worth-Dallas. Stops would include Belen, Soccorro and Las Cruces. Introduced October 1987.

Overall service improvements:

1. Additional connections from Albuquerque to Las Cruces, El Paso, Denver, Tucson, Phoenix and via through cars to St. Louis and other points in the Midwest.
2. Connecting bus service between Lamy and Santa Fe meeting all trains.
3. New station stops on existing routes at Grants (unmanned) and Bernalillo (unmanned).
4. New routes would provide train service to Alamogordo, Carrizozo, Vaughn, Ft. Sumner, Clovis, Belen, Soccorro, and Las Cruces. (Las Cruces and Clovis only would be manned)
5. Attempts would be made to interconnect bus services through use of common terminals at on-line cities and towns thus reducing overhead costs both to Amtrak and motorcoach operators.
6. Development of new agreements with tourcoach operators for services to major resorts and parks at rail/bus terminals.
7. No additional servicing facilities would be needed in New Mexico except for minor car cleaning at Albuquerque and locomotive refueling. Trains passing through the state would receive major servicing at Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver or El Paso. A new servicing facility would be developed at El Paso.

Present Amtrak passenger boardings and detrainings in New Mexico would be expected to rise from the current (FY 1981) estimated 120,000 to 763,000 in 1990.

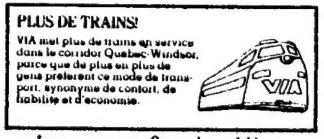
Ronald Sheck is being considered as a possible nominee to the Amtrak Board of Directors.

RAIL CANADA

CANADA IS UP IN ARMS over the Transport Minister's plan to cut back about one-fifth to one-fourth of the VIA Rail system. While the plan was leaked to the press and published previously in RTN, the official announcement came from Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin on July 27. The cuts are to take place in November. The latest list of cuts is as follows: Routes eliminated: Winnipeg-Vancouver via Edmonton (CN); Montreal-Halifax ATLANTIC LIMITED; Regina-Saskatoon-Prince Albert; Edmonton-Drumheller; Winnipeg-Armstrong; Capreol-Hornepayne; Montreal-Lachute-Ottawa; Montreal-Mont Laurier; Ste. Foy-Chambord; Ste. Foy-Hervey; Moncton-Edmundston; Toronto-Havelock; Toronto-Barrie; Toronto-Stouffville; Montreal-Sherbrooke. Cut in frequency: Senneterre-Cochrane to thrice/weekly; Montreal-Chicoutimi to 3/weekly; Montreal-Senneterre to 3/weekly; Sudbury-White River to 3/weekly summer only; Capreol-Winnipeg to 3/weekly year-round; Jasper-Prince Rupert to 3/weekly all year. Added or extended service: Winnipeg-Regina-Saskatoon; Saskatoon-Edmonton; Saint John-Fredericton; Ottawa-Sudbury; Jasper-Edmonton.

The reaction against the plan has been so intense that it seems clear that the ruling Liberal party has made a political mistake in pushing for the cuts. The opposition Conservative party announced a series of public hearings on the matter across Canada, seeing an opportunity to make political hay. Opposition leader Joe Clark on Aug 7 announced formation of a Task Force on Rail Passenger Service, chaired by former transport minister Don Mazankowski. Public hearings were scheduled as follows: Toronto Aug 11, Ottawa-Hull Aug 13, Sherbrooke Aug 17, Peterborough Aug 19, Halifax Aug 25, Moncton Aug 26, Saint John N.B. Aug 27, Winnipeg Sep 8, Saskatoon Sep 9, Edmonton Sep 10, Kamloops Sep 14, Vancouver Sep 15, Northwestern Ontario to be announced. A summary of the findings of the task force will be presented to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and Parliament.

Newspapers across Canada seemed editorially set against Transport Canada's plan. The Montreal Gazette accused the transport minister of "going out of his way to help undermine (Canadian) unity through his rail policy" and said he was short-circuiting the democratic process. The Halifax Chronicle-Herald spoke of "subtle deception." The Vancouver Province said Pepin was "condemning some pretty major population centres, particularly in the West, to do without railway links." The Toronto Star used the terms "unhealthy precedent", "hasty, ham-fisted approach" and "abuse of power." The Toronto Globe and Mail accused the feds of recessing the House so members of Parliament would not be around when it announced its "drastic cuts." Said the Edmonton Journal, one of the most bitter denouncers of the plan, "When the first Canadian Pacific Railway passenger train rolled into Vancouver in 1886, these epic words were telegraphed to Queen Victoria: 'Canada linked.' Now, with the stroke of a pen and a half-hour news conference, Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin has destroyed an important portion--and most certainly the spirit--of that link." The Saint John Telegraph-Journal called the cutting of the ATLANTIC LIMITED "a transportation setback that pushes us further off the map." The Edmonton Sun's senior editor Kaye Corbett named Pepin as one of the top ten dingbats of 1981 and added, "May an eagle with diarrhea nest in his greying hair."



TRANSPORT 2000 CANADA on Aug 7 called upon the transport ministry to "reverse its stand and start thinking positively about rail passenger services for Canadians." The consumer group released a Plan to Maintain the Double-Spline Service across Canada with no cuts in present routes and levels of service. T-2000 said that new locomotives and bi-level passenger cars should be purchased to lower costs and improve ridership. T-2000 said its study shows that the new equipment's capital costs could be recovered in 7.6 years. It called for an order immediately of 35 locomotives and 220 bi-level cars at a cost of $368 million in 1984 dollars. Such an order would be economically justified because of the greater economies and better passenger drawing power of the new cars. Said T-2000 National President Guy Chartrand, "This will provide an exceptionally viable and effective service of which all Canadians can be proud and which will serve Canadians all across the country."

TRANSPORT 2000 PRESIDENT Guy Chartrand, traveling in the Maritimes in early August, told citizens that the best way possibly to save some of the routes scheduled for cutback is to attend the public hearings being held by the opposition party.

VIA PASSENGER HANDLINGS on some portions of routes up for discontinuance for the calendar year 1980 are given here (figures are number of persons on board for all or part of each route segment--these are exact counts): Vancouver-Kamloops 116,669; Kamloops-Blue River 128,448; Blue River-Edmonton 142,221; Edmonton-Watrous 174,647; Watrous-Winnipeg 145,617; Winnipeg-Thunder Bay 157,496; Montreal-Megantic 165,432; Megantic-Brownville 150,148; Brownville-Saint John 155,566; Saint John-Moncton 151,643; Moncton-Halifax 148,554.

VIA RAIL CANADA took official delivery of its first LRC trainset in a ceremony at Montreal's Windsor Station on July 7. Over 400 invited guests, including Transport Minister Pepin, attended. The train is the first of an initial order for 50 new coaches and 21 locomotives, all of which are to be delivered by the end of 1981. This train was pictured on the cover of RTN #225.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

CONRAIL AND SEPTA on Aug 20 agreed on a $48 million cost to enable Conrail to continue commuter rail operations in Southeastern Pennsylvania thru Dec 31. Conrail had threatened to discontinue service at the end of August unless a financial agreement was reached. Of the figure, $25.7 million comes from subsidies from various sources, and the rest is from passenger fares.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD got a new president Aug 13--Robin H. H. Wilson, formerly a TWA senior operations vice president.

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT director Adriana Gianturco told a state Assembly Committee in Long Beach on Aug 14 that a commuter rail system for Los Angeles and Orange Counties could be built with existing tax revenue, at a cost of $5-10 million a mile. One proposed line would be a rail right of way in the median strip of the newly-approved Century Freeway, between L.A. International Airport and Norwalk. The committee chairman said that the first experimental line should be built between Long Beach and Los Angeles (downtown to downtown).

NEW YORK CITY'S Transit Authority has received a low bid of $1.06 million each for new R-62 subway cars for the IRT lines. The bid, from Kawasaki, is about 67% higher than officials had estimated earlier this year, prompting the president of the City Council to suggest rehabilitating old cars instead of buying new ones.

CHICAGO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY this month received a report from Mayor Byrne's transit consultants, and it backed the CTA's proposed reduction in operations for economy. In fact, it went further and suggested even more cutbacks. The possibility of new cutbacks in rail service is raised by the report. The CTA got a new operations head on Aug 7--former BN vice president Theodore G. Schuster.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF Railroad is to be paid over $1 million by Chicago's RTA that it neglected to bill that body for. In addition, the Milwaukee Road will receive $1 million that it did not bill the RTA for, in a calculation error.

SAN DIEGO TROLLEY in its third revenue week: There are four ticket machines at the Border station; ticket and change booths at the Santa Fe Depot and Border stations; roundtrips are sold there. C Street was closed to autos in the vicinity of Trolley stations, and C Street double track was used, on weekends. This track becomes single track for the two final blocks to the Santa Fe Depot; the switch there is the standard spring switch in contra st to the sophisticated switch just west of City College station, where weekday single-tracking commences. The barrier-free honor system of prepaying fares before boarding is working smoothly. Inspectors may check tickets aboard the Trolleys; at San Ysidro-International Border station an inspector is stationed between the ticket machines and the Trolley. One 3-car and four 2-car trains are regularly in service. On a Saturday round-trip all meets were made perfectly, the runs in the scheduled 45mins. There was an 11-minute delayed departure from Santa Fe Depot. Trolleys are leaving Santa Fe Depot at 10, 30 and 50mins past the hour; the Border on the hour and 20 and 40 mins past. MTDB's General Manager Tom Larwin gave a presentation at Long Beach on Aug 14 to a well-attended hearing by the State Assembly Transportation Committee. (Report by Robert J. Swan.)

B&M COMMUTER TRAIN crash near Prides Crossing station north of Boston Aug 11 killed three people and injured 28. A 4-car commuter train crashed headon into a northbound freight, with the lead passenger car (the train was being pushed by a locomotive) striking and running up on top of the freight loco--GP9 #1731. The commuter train engineer, in the front of lead car 1301, was among the dead. The two trains were on a single track due to track work, and some problem in transmitting train orders put the two in the same location in opposite directions.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

MAY 1981 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE OVER 1980

Metroliners	98,687	-28.7
NE Corr Conventional	525,960	-3.6
Phila-NH-Springfield	22,422	-5.4
NY-Philadelphia	203,584	-.5
Phila-Harrisburg	72,897	-14.8
NY-Harrisburg	27,354	-1.8
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR:	950,904	-7.3
NY-Niagara Falls	64,229	-.7
Chicago-St. Louis	26,871	-9.9
Chicago-Milwaukee	25,267	-2.5
Chic.-Detroit/Toledo	40,951	-2.7
Chicago-Carbondale	14,514	-4.6
Chicago-Quincy	6,281	-18.9
L.A.-San Diego	115,920	-8.7
Seattle-Eugene	9,339	10.2
Vancouver-Seattle	7,823	32.1
Washington-Cincinnati	12,382	10.5
Wash.-Martinsburg	23,399	-4.1
Oakland-Bakersfield	16,628	5.0
New York-Montreal	6,717	8.2
Chicago-Port Huron	10,699	8.7
Chicago-Dubuque	3,690	-3.0
Chicago-Duluth	12,486	28.2
Chicago-Valparaiso	18,195	-.8
Chicago-Indianapolis	6,760	--
Chicago-Peoria	2,085	--
Chicago-Kansas City	14,502	139.5
Phila.-Pittsburgh	8,485	50.3
Portland-Eugene	8,077	--
Chicago-Minneapolis	5,210	1.3
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	460,510	3.9
Washington-Montreal	12,323	2.2
New York-Florida	60,248	1.2
Chicago-NY/Washington	24,357	6.4
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	16,881	32.8
Chicago-Seattle	16,776	8.7
Chicago-San Francisco	30,541	2.8
Chicago-Los Angeles	29,724	4.9
Chicago-New Orleans	19,387	5.2
Chicago-Texas	18,344	25.6
L.A.-New Orleans	9,296	3.1
L.A.-Seattle	51,212	12.4
Chicago-NY/Boston	29,242	8.5
Boston-Newport News	6,159	-17.4
New York-Savannah	13,794	-7.3
Seattle-Salt Lake/Chi	18,922	21.5
New York-New Orleans	25,905	14.1
L.A./Ogden-Chicago	12,722	6.2
TOTAL LONG DIST.:	395,833	7.6
Special trains	15,405	1099.8
SYSTEM TOTAL:	1,822,652	-.8

Amtrak released the May ridership figures on July 17. There was less than a 1% difference between this May's ridership and that of May 1980. Patronage was up in all categories except that Northeast ridership was uniformly down. All long distance trains were up in patronage except for two which operate partly in the Northeast Corridor.

With the May figures, Amtrak made some changes in the way it reports ridership. The changes will be most evident if one compares the April figures (see RTN #225) with the present ones. The DESERT WIND is no longer included with the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, but is reported separately, including ridership of its thru cars to and from Chicago. The PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL is separated from the Vancouver-Eugene category. Chicago-Minneapolis is reported separately. The PIONEER figures include ridership of thru passengers to Chicago. Seattle-Eugene and Portland-Eugene are reported separately, in addition to Vancouver-Seattle.

The Arkansas Association of RR Passengers complained about the change, which they said shifts (in May) almost 125,000 passengers from long distance to short distance or corridor categories. The effect on the INTER-AMERICAN, about which they were most concerned, is that the train's ridership is shown as 18,344 instead of the 28,860 it would have been under the old system.

This happened because Amtrak shifted the data of all riders on long-distance trains between short-distance boundaries to short-distance categories. The result is to make the corridors look better (and long distance look worse). However, this particular month no amount of statistical juggling could hide the fact that the long distance trains are where the strong business is.

Said Arkansas ARP: "For those Northeastern congressmen on powerful committees who look only at the 'bottom line' (i.e., total head count), this change in accounting method serves to strengthen their already strong bias against long-haul trains."

Frimbo Remembered

by Peter Putnam Bretz

The slide show was progressing nicely. The picture on the screen now was of CB&Q's parlor-lounge-dome-obeservation car "Silver Veranda." A voice called out of the darkened room: "Say, know who that is? That's Rogers E. M. Whitaker, the world's greatest rail buff." Well! That was news to us. When we took the picture --one of many that morning--the old gentleman we had noticed reading the Official Guide had said nothing, and had kept to himself. We looked hard at the screen, imprinting him to our memory. The train was the DENVER ZEPHYR and the date was Dec 23, 1962.

Fifteen years later we saw Mr. Whitaker on the platform of Terminal Station in Birmingham, Alabama. We said hello this time, and again took his picture. It was Apr 13, 1977, and we were here for the running of the Amtrak Transcontinental Steam Excursion, featuring the 4449 in Freedom Train colors. Whitaker had booked passage in the parlor car "Nathan Hale" from Birmingham all the way to El Paso; then later from Los Angeles to Klamath Falls, Oregon. He was aboard during the infamous ICG incident where the 4449 was given almost no warning to go thru a 20mph crossover. We smashed across at 50mph! Frimbo commented that it reminded him of operations on the Angolan railways.

* * *

His nickname wasn't well-known until the publication of his book "All Aboard with E. M. Frimbo" in 1974. He himself enjoyed anonymity of sorts until his appearance on NBC's "Tomorrow" TV show in 1975. The program was taped aboard a special steam excursion down the New York and Long Branch RR, pulled by 4-6-2 #148 (ex-FEC). Tom Snyder interviewed Rogers Whitaker in one of the coaches as the scenery flashed by outside. After that, the little old man with the pot belly was well-recognized by the railfan community.

Frimbo had class. He always dressed well--was famous for his black Homburg. He maintained "certain standards" of decorum, had a dry wit and sharp humor, always chose iced tea as beverage in the diner. His book gives a good insight into his character. Whenever he was present on a fan-trip the inevitable knot of people would gather around him, from time to time asking awed and respectful questions. He was rarely found sitting alone. If there was a sleeper or other first class accommodation on the train, Mr. Whitaker was customarily booked into the choicest room as a special guest. But then he would invariably be out with the rest of us, shunning his private accommodations until bedtime, or for special interviews.

* * *

During one of the lazy days in the parlor car as the 4449 loped across Texas, some bratty little kid somehow managed to get into the first class section for a stop or two--riding with his doting parents. He yelled and screamed at first, running up and down the aisle, but was calmed down by a "friend" of Frimbo who suggested to the kid: "Why don't you come up here and sit on grandfather's lap (meaning Frimbo)? Grandfather would be very happy for you to sit and stay awhile." So the brat climbed up and sat on Frimbo's knees. Tho he had never laid eyes on this kid before, he didn't say anything, even as the little monster turned and squirmed, spilled cookie crumbs and generally made life miserable for Frimbo. Finally, this cheery little child departed, leaving Frimbo feeling like W.C. Fields. The old man then got up, brushed away the debris and made his way over to his so-called friend who had set this up. The friend, a lawyer from Los Angeles, was laughing as Frimbo glared down. "All right now, are you ready for me?" asked Frimbo as he plopped himself down on the lap of his friend.

* * *

We were still in awe of Mr. Whitaker that day on the platform at Klamath Falls in 1977 during the afternoon water stop for the 4449. We had left the train in San Francisco and had motorcaded up here in a rented little yellow Opel. Frimbo was debarking the train here in Oregon as he had pressing business elsewhere. Bruce Heard spotted us nearby and asked if we could take the old man to his hotel. An honor and a pleasure, to be sure. After saying goodbye to a great many people, Frimbo let us escort him to the car. It was a struggle to get a portable typewriter, his two suitcases and Frimbo into that Opel. After a cramped ride, and getting settled in his hotel room, we repaired across the street to what he remembered as a fine old restaurant. But it was gone, and a soda shop was in its place. We can still see him opening up his hamburger and spotting that broken, woebegone patty staring up at him. We took care of what check there was, whereupon Frimbo said, "If I had known you were going to pay the bill, I would have ordered much more."

Where are you off to, we wanted to know. He said that after catching the COAST STAR-LIGHT this evening, he would take the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR to Chicago, and the LAKE SHORE LIMITED to New York, there to join George Pins in his private car for a trip on an Erie-Lackawanna freight train, "The Apollo." "I can't miss that," said Frimbo. Would it give him any new mileage? "Ummm, no, except a little connecting track around Scranton."

* * *

On the inaugural of the second SAN JOAQUIN, Feb 4, 1980, Amtrak leased SP business car "Airslie" for the run. Frimbo sat in the solarium section, holding gentle conversation with those who passed. Every so often, he'd just nod off to sleep, sometimes in the middle of talk about the latest doings of Amtrak. We never saw him out on the open platform, however. No doubt he had zillions of miles like that in the past. Later, when the SP official chased us all out during the (non-leased) return trip up the San Joaquin Valley, Frimbo went quietly and held court in an Amfleet car.

Next day it happened, that unbeknownst to us, we had booked a roomette right next to Rogers's on the COAST STARLIGHT to Los Angeles. We were both surprised. We resisted the urge to question him the entire day, but we did have some genteel conversations. Frimbo had already celebrated his 2,500,000th mile (on this same train recently) and so... Did he ever ride the NYO&W? "Why, naturally," he said. "I arranged many charter trips on the railroad during the 1930's." What about the Inland Gateway Route? "Oh, I was a dining car steward on that run for a couple of summers." And so it went. Finally, after much discussion, we mentioned a recent excursion on the "Winston-Salem Southbound Railway." "Oh," said Frimbo, "I missed that one due to illness, and also the one they held a few years before that." Aha!

(Opposite page:) Frimbo consults with an Amtrak ticket agent at Chicago Union Station after the Ft. Leonard Wood trip (photo by Pete Bretz). (Left:) Amtrak's Arthur Lloyd and E.M. Frimbo celebrate the writer's 2,500,000th mile of rail travel at a special lunch on the COAST STARLIGHT on May 12, 1978 (see RTN #173). Photo by Jim Russell.

we expostulated. There is some trackage we have that the great Frimbo doesn't have. Oh boy, and behind the Royal Hudson too. "Well," the man said, "Have you ever ridden the Great Slave Lake Railroad? No? How about the Moroccan Railway's line south out of Casablanca? Nope? Ah, then, (chuckle, chuckle) let's talk about the weather." We were properly put in our place.

* * *

During the one-day layover in San Francisco of the 1977 Amtrak Steam Excursion with the 4449, those of us who had been with the train mostly from the beginning took the day off, did some sightseeing, etc. Frimbo didn't. He spent the day riding down the San Joaquin Valley to Merced and back. A couple of years later, anticipating his

2,500,000th mile, he wanted to time it so it would coincide with #11-12 negotiating the horseshoe curve above San Luis Obispo. A party had been arranged and Frimbo was heading out aboard #5. Somewhere west of Denver, the train was delayed, then annulled, and Frimbo was put aboard a plane to San Francisco. That played havoc with his mileage totals, so Frimbo rode commuter lines and short hops to run up about 500 miles to even up the miles he had missed in the short time between appointments.

* * *

On Sep 29, 1979 we met Frimbo as he headed for the platform at Chicago Union Station. Special cars on the SHAWNEE took a large group of rail buffs to Kankakee, thence by bus to Effner, Illinois and the first fan trip over the TP&W in recent years. As we rode along, railfans came and dwelt at the feet of the Great Oracle of the Rails. Frimbo was gracious but brief as he spoke with each person in turn. He sat with Amtrak's Bruce Heard, a frequent traveling companion. Over a Superliner panic-box breakfast, talk was about the high speed we were making over the questionable ICG track. We asked, "Mr. Whitaker, were you ever in a train wreck?" "Yes, indeed." He rolled his eyes as the memories came back. "It was in 1938 or so, down in Mexico. I was on the overnight train from Mexico City to Oaxaca and we were twisting and turning along a narrow canyon next to a fast-flowing river. A meet had been arranged between the two overnight trains--eastbound and westbound. On a passing track," Frimbo continued, "way up in the mountains on a precipice along which we were to proceed just above a very high drop into a valley. The opposing train was supposed to take siding; we were to run thru. This opposing train held the main and was just coming to a stop when our train barreled around the bend expecting to find the main clear. We found, however, that we were about to be involved in a head-on collision! Fortunately, I'd just returned from breakfast and was sitting down with my back to the engine in my Pullman car. And when the collision occurred, I was the only one in my car who was not thrown out of berths or seats onto the floor. The most interesting thing about it was that tho quite a few people were hurt, --fortunately no one was killed--the main concern of the passengers aboard the train and of the train crew was whether a visitor to their country--me, a lone Americano--had sustained any injury. Everybody on the train, it seemed to me, crowded into my car to find out if I was all right; and then went around inquiring of other passengers how they had fared in the collision. It was a nice gesture, I felt, and it increased my everlasting fondness for the Republic of Mexico." Most interesting and exciting, we said. "Yes, it was," Frimbo replied, and in answer to a final question confirmed that indeed the line to Oaxaca had been narrow gauge at the time.

Later that day, we relaxed and reclined in our respective Pullman cars aboard the "Prairie Marksman", the name of our special, running about a year before the Amtrak train. At El Paso, Illinois we all got out for a photo runpast. Here the old Illinois Central's line down from Freeport crosses on its way to Clinton and Centralia. The town was ancient, but a knoll of fresh green grass led down from the street to the tracks --a nice place to stand for pictures. Frimbo remarked at the architecture of the old El Paso Opera House, now painted primer white and used as a merchandise store. It seems Rogers was quite interested in building design and style; in fact he commented on many edifices as seen thru the train windows during the day. Before our diesel-powered special could back up for the photo run, an eastbound TP&W freight went by. It wasn't a long train, so we tape-recorded the whistle blasts and passing freight cars into the small portable machine we carried. As the caboose cleared, we said into the microphone that the train must have had 35 cars or so. "Twenty-nine," came a voice about ten feet away. Frimbo had counted the cars. "When I was a boy," he said, "my father would beat me up if I didn't report to him the exact number of cars in any given passing freight train. It's a lesson I've never forgotten."

* * *

Eating a late lunch in the dining car on the COAST STARLIGHT one day, we enjoyed a most satisfactory meal with Frimbo. Everything the Amtrak chef prepared seemed to be just right. The menu at that time offered Pecan Pie ala mode and we both ordered it. When it arrived: perfection! The pecan pie was a true, sharp wedge cut, not crumbly and served warm. The vanilla ice cream sat upon the center of the pie in a nice round scoop. Then came a lathering of whipped cream. A maraschino cherry topped it off. We stared with mouths open for a moment. Then Frimbo exclaimed, "I don't believe it!" We savored every bite while gazing out upon the beautiful Pacific Ocean, the waves playing on the shoreline. Frimbo reminisced about #98 and #99, riding the LARK, and other occasions with the trains of the Southern Pacific. "They were one of the best," he said.

* * *

We met E. M. Frimbo again during the DESERT WIND inaugural run of Oct 26-27, 1979. He sat in a comfortable lounge chair in Henry Luna's car #100 reserved for the trip by Amtrak. Rogers drank iced tea and made comments about train trips and rail mileages. He allowed that he was always behind in his figuring because he counts

everything--daytime and nighttime travel; both directions over a stretch count as two trips. And...the question we'd wanted answered: Does one count mileage other than regular railroad? "Since I was chairman of the rules committee on mileages when it met many years ago, what I say goes." Narrow gauge counts, of course. Tourist pikes? Naturally. Streetcars and interurbans? Most definitely. What about subway lines? "Yes," said Frimbo emphatically, "one does count subway miles." Wow! we thought, how could we ever remember all the NYC subway system (IRT, BMT, IND) riding we did in the late 40's and early 50's? "How can you tell," we wanted to know, "how far it is from, say, Pelham Manor in the Bronx, down the Lexington Avenue line to 42nd Street or anyplace else?" "Well," Mr. Frimbo said, "that type of thing had been quite a problem for me until I secured, from a gentleman who works for the city, a detailed profile of the lines which included mileage figures. It's easy to do New York now, but when I travel to other cities, a special inquiry has to be made and that takes time. It took me two years to get my mileages for the trip to Poland. And I still haven't got certain lines in Asia." So your totals include subway riding? "Yes, assuredly." Actually, Frimbo said that anything that is steel wheel upon steel rail is counted--even rollercoasting.

* * *

The last time we saw Frimbo was when he joined the "Fort Leonard Wood Special" from New York last Jan 4. He got on in Indianapolis after having ridden the HOOSIER STATE the previous day. Naturally, there was a room reserved for him in the slumbercoach attached to our train. We had just racked up some new miles ourselves from Columbus, Ohio over the ex-Pennsy via Piqua. Had Frimbo covered the trackage at any time? (What a ridiculous question.) Quick as a wink he nodded in the affirmative and went on to name the day train on the line, the Pennsy's FORT HAYES. The U.S. Government railway was new to Frimbo as it was to us, but Rogers told us the mileage: 19.

After dropping off the troops around 9pm, Amtrak deadheaded the train back to St. Louis and hooked the equipment onto #300, the STATE HOUSE, which left for Chicago at 4:45am. Frimbo stayed asleep until after Pontiac, Illinois. He tottered up thru umpteen cars to a working Amcafe, got tea and sweet rolls, then trudged all the way back to eat them in his room. At Union Station, we both had some time to kill before going our respective ways. Certainly we'd use up the time riding a commuter train. Milwaukee or BN, we queried? No, no. Frimbo said we had to ride the Chicago and Northwestern. The three-block walk over to Northwestern Station was a blast of icy wind and low temperatures. Waiting for stoplights, Mr. Frimbo was almost blown away. Finally, chiled thru, we approached the great structure. "Turn right here," said Rogers, altho the station was on the left. He showed us a new way to enter--in a building, up some stairs, around a corner and then a warm enclosed passage over Canal Street. We can picture Frimbo there in his great black overcoat, wearing his famous Homburg, stooped over with his 81 years, dangling a BOAC travel bag. Once inside the massive station (what a majestic place! It had always been the most "railroad" of all the Chicago stations --now it is coming down) we selected a roundtrip up to Crystal Lake. The train was push-pull, but powered by C&NW E-8s. And Frimbo liked the fact that the train was painted Northwestern yellow and green, not the new RTA red and silver and brown.

* * *

During the short layover at Fort Leonard Wood, one of the Frisco trainmen recognized our name and mentioned that he was an RTN subscriber. We chatted for a moment, standing in the aisle of the slumbercoach. The conversation turned to railroad mileages. This fellow said "I sure would like to meet the Mr. E.M. Frimbo someday. I hear he's quite a guy. Maybe I'll run into him some time." We gestured for him to turn around and be introduced to Frimbo himself, who had been sitting behind him all the while. Our trainman then became agitated and overwhelmed and happy and nervous and thrilled and incoherent--all at once. He treated Frimbo as a celebrity, which he indeed was. "I'll always remember this day," the trainman said.

* * *

Now, with Frimbo, the two of us waited on the snow-covered platform at Crystal Lake. We sat inside the station a bit, then crossed the tracks to catch the southbound train coming in from Harvard. Riding on the top level, Mr. Frimbo asked us (this was after his series of painful operations) if we thought he was going to "kick off soon?" No, we honestly said, you look really chipper today. And he did. He said his plan was to go to India for the third time to get mileage that has always eluded him. And this summer he was scheduled to visit the "Quebec, North Shore and Labrador RR" for the first time. Why had he waited so long for that line? "Because it's new and diesel-powered and will wait, whereas cog railways of Brazil or Turkish steam won't wait."

We took a chance on a risky question. When you go, we said, what shape do you want your coffin to be carved in? Without a second's hesitation, Frimbo replied, "The shape of a New York Central Hudson."

Back at Chicago, we had to walk those three blocks, or was it three miles, of icy wind to Union Station again. It seemed like the Steppes of Central Asia. Frimbo nearly didn't make it--slipping on ice-covered sidewalks. But we helped steady him and moved to the leeward side of the street. Finally, in the warmth of the Amtrak station, it was time to go. We said goodbye and Rogers E. M. Whitaker preboarded into his bedroom on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED.

A TAKEOVER OF CANADIAN TRANSPORT POLICY

by Robert W. Rynerson

The television screen showed us Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin, smilingly explaining the benefits to be gained by getting rid of a fifth of the country's rail passenger network. VIA Rail Canada's President Frank Roberts sat silently beside him. Behind that scene, however, is a story of intrigue and Ottawa power-brokering that stretches back over a decade. To the men and women involved in that struggle, the disrupted travel plans, abandoned train stations, and wrecked careers of railway employees are only numbers on a balance sheet.

It isn't a financial balance sheet, either. It's a tally of bureaucratic wins and losses. Who sets transport policy for Canada? What is the transport policy? When the broadcast networks run the typical "last run of old number 3" stories this fall, there will be people celebrating a victory in Ottawa. Members of Parliament thought that they were setting transportation policies in 1967 when they passed the National Transportation Act. The Canadian Transport Commission was given a broad mandate to amplify general policies under that Act. But the victory celebration will be at Transport Canada, which, according to the Law Reform Commission of Canada, was given "Virtually no policy role... in the National Transportation Act."

The novel feature of the VIA Rail cutback is that it has taken the form of action to adopt a secretly-prepared plan, overturning the results of the nationwide hearings, which had shown little support for the early forms of that same plan. The Transport Canada plan for VIA Rail reflects the overwhelming aviation orientation of that department. It contains the following elements:

(1) An end to branch or remote area rail passenger service, without regard to alternatives or mitigating factors such as tourist interest.

(2) A collection of "end-point to end-point" high-speed day trains between major centres, with little concern for connectivity.

(3) A token transcontinental service, for the time being.

These concepts have been imported from the United States, where the DOT there has taken similar positions in regard to Amtrak. The ideas originate in thinking geared to air travel, where the high speed on long trips allows planners to ignore the intricacies of connecting service on the assumption that passengers will somehow crawl into the airport from their actual starting point. It is further encouraged by computerized planning processes. Limitations in that process, including limitations in the ability of the people designing the "model" systems for testing, lead to difficulties in coping with rail travel. Intercity air travel offers a few points, or "nodes" linked by direct lines, and basically offers only one class of service. Intercity auto travel can be model material as well. Bus travel confuses the issue with many points, but still has only one class in most cases.

Rail travel confronts the planner with every complication offered by every other travel mode. On long distance trains in Canada, three distinct classes can be spotted (coaches, Dayniters, sleepers), and within the sleeping car group there are variations. The computers generally want to deal only with speed, cost, and service frequency anyway. The value of a sleeping car room cannot be measured by those factors. Non-rail connections, which are critical to the success of a rail passenger service, are very sensitive and difficult to model, as long as trains do not offer the overwhelming speed of airplanes.

Computers have also had difficulty in digesting the value of breakfast in a dining car in the Canadian Rockies or the stars and the northern lights seen from a sleeping car window in northern Ontario. They have never met a future spouse on board the SUPER CONTINENTAL, nor have they sat down to discuss transport policy with a railroad president in a lounge car one evening. Those things are dismissed as nostalgia or romantic guff. In fact, those things are sold every day by hotels and resorts, but they are not sold by airlines or bus lines. Those modes most closely fit the computer model, putting "trips" into "vehicles" which zip thru a "network" between "nodes" en route from their "origin" to their "destination."

Computers have been getting smarter in the last few years, but the generation of planners who first worked with this method are now in the decision-making positions. There is also going to be an ongoing problem as the very use of computers gives government officials the feeling of omnipotence. Being able to quickly model various alternatives on a nationwide basis makes quick and dramatic action possible. Formerly, decisions regarding railway passenger service were made on an incremental basis by the Transport Commission, following public hearings. The hearing process is clumsy when a computer is sitting there ready to answer the same questions. The government is faced with a choice between a process which generates a great deal of information about a small part of the nation thru hearings, or the Transport Canada process which generates a great deal of information based on a small part, the digestible part, of the nation's data.

The public, however, will not let itself become redundant. As patrons of the railway passenger service, they will not make use of the hodgepodge of unconnected routes proposed by Transport Canada. Either adjustments will be made to that department's plan, at costs which may equal or exceed the system now being dumped, or the VIA Rail "deficit" will balloon to levels which again will attract the eye of budget cutters. As citizens, they will be forced to take political actions to counter the political actions engineered by Transport Canada. As consumers, the public will not turn up in sufficient numbers to make a difference to air or bus lines, a point well-demonstrated in previous train-off cases. Most will switch to their automobiles, while the foreign tourists who use the transcontinental trains will be diverted by their agencies to other destinations.

In Ottawa, a Transport Canada official draws a line thru the name of Jasper.

In Ottawa, a minister draws a line thru the name "Canadian Transport Commission."

In Ontario somewhere, a stationmaster draws lines thru a list of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan destinations on a train departure board.

In Tokyo, a travel agent draws a line thru the tour named "Canadian Rockies."

In Chilliwack or Stettler or Blue River, an elderly couple draws lines thru "Bus, too crowded, smoky and uncomfortable" and "air, too costly and inaccessible" and "rail, unavailable" and sets out to drive across the mountains at Christmas.

In Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver, a young executive planning a holiday with his family drawa a line thru Edmonton, "too many changes of train." See the Edmonton friends another time. Years from now, he'll draw another line thru Edmonton when choosing a headquarters site for his company.

In Jasper, a railway clerk draws lines thru the names of departed employees.

This process never stops. Having achieved part of their objectives, the people inside Transport Canada will begin work on their next list of crossed-out names. When the time is right, they'll prop the next Transport Minister up next to the next VIA Rail president, to read off the urgent list of economy-necessitated cuts. There never will be a last train crossed out, tho, even if it is only a local from Toronto to Brantford. If that happened, undue attention would be focused on the department itself, and the next names crossed out would be those who were paid to dismantle the railway passenger system.

MIXED TRAIN OF THOUGHTS

AIRLINE FOOD INTRODUCTION on Amtrak dining cars has been the biggest subject of concern among many rail supporters in the past weeks. Amtrak has undoubtedly gotten the message that passengers find it unsatisfactory, and is trying to "modify" it to make it acceptable. Trains are now using paper tablecloths instead of merely allowing a bare table to confront diners. Convection ovens are reportedly being used in place of microwave ovens, to warm the frozen food better. Salt and pepper shakers are being supplied, rather than small paper containers. One of the main complaints we've heard is about the lack of metal utensils. The problem with the latter, according to an Amtrak source, is that much of it gets stolen (even tho it's neither valuable nor a collector's item) and the replacement costs contribute to Amtrak's $60 million annual dining car deficit. However, it is possible that Amtrak will be forced to return to metal utensils. The food tray is being increased in size for a less cramped look. But what about the food itself? Will Amtrak consider the use of outside caterers? Unlikely, we have learned. A number of other possibilities are being considered. One interesting one is to provide first class passengers with one sitting reserved for them, at which a "home-style" meal would be served, with one item--e.g., potatoes--served from a single bowl by a waiter. There have been many complaints about the steak dinner, and Amtrak VP-Passenger Services Rima Parkhurst told an RTN reader in a letter that the steak had been discontinued, replaced by short ribs of beef. She said, "We cannot return to 'traditional' dining car service, but we will continue to refine our food product and our service until we, and our passengers, are satisfied." Another theme in comments we have received is that some airline food is very good, and why can't Amtrak achieve that quality. Author Ronald Sheck also praises the service and food quality of French National Railways "in their grill express cars and by at-your-seat tray meal service. Amtrak must realize that it can be done and then do it". We have learned that the dinner menu will likely be expanded from the present three entrees to five, and there will be a certain degree of rotation. Lunch will be experimented with; perhaps it will be all sandwiches. And Amtrak reportedly wants to upgrade breakfast offerings.....

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AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS strike continues (it began Aug 3). About two weeks into the strike, Amtrak reported that it was losing about 250,000 callers to its reservation system each day, even tho capacity had been increased 15%. The new New York-Toronto MAPLE LEAF had a reported 150% increase in patronage due to the strike. However, on the whole air traffic was tending to normalize, tho the tour business around the country was said to be down markedly.....

THE GRAND CANYON should be reachable by passenger train soon. The Santa Fe line between Williams AZ and the Grand Canyon was finally sold, on Aug 5, to a group of private developers for the sum of $3.05 million. Buyer was Canyons Railway Co. of Saugus CA, whose president is Ken Perryman, an accountant. An Apr 4, 1982 startup of service, using both steam and diesel power, is anticipated. A 60-acre site in Williams will house a depot, restaurant and lodge. There will be some rehabilitation of the 65-mile rail line. Williams is on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED route, tho the train does not stop there, stopping instead at Flagstaff, about 33 miles further east.....

CHICAGO UNION STATION will be the site of a new 22-story office building known as Gateway 4, on land over which Amtrak owns 50% of the air rights, thus bringing the rail corporation some additional income. Train sheds are now being torn down for the construction.....

THE "OVERNIGHT TRAIN" between Sacramento and Los Angeles CA is finally set for a startup, after a stormy period of negotiating. As we reported in issue 226, the National Arbitration Panel okayed the train on July 17. However, on Aug 14, just before the deadline to do so, the Southern Pacific appealed the decision to the ICC. SP's gripe was with the schedule of the new train. But after a week of talks between Amtrak and the railroad, the matter was settled on Aug 21. No public announcement was made at that time because Caltrans director Gianturco was on vacation; but after she returns on Aug 24 there is expected to be an announcement of the startup date. The new schedule has the train leaving Sacramento at 7:55pm and reaching Los Angeles at 9am. Northbound it leaves L.A. at 8:25pm and reaches Sacramento at 9:30am. Equipment for the train will be obtained as follows: Amcoaches from the PIONEER, Amdinette from the INTER-AMERICAN, and sleeper from the DESERT WIND. A pre-inaugural run will be made northbound the day before regular service starts. SP train numbers 73-74, 75-76 will be used for the new train--numbers formerly assigned to the LARK and OAKLAND LARK.....

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LAST SUPERLINER CAR of the order of 284, delivered in Chicago on July 30, was sleeping car no. 32009, and it was named the "George M. Pullman" in a special ceremony attended by Amtrak president Alan Boyd and Pullman-Standard president Thomas Begel. A special train including the car ran from Chicago to Milwaukee and back, leaving Chicago at about 6:30pm and arriving back around 10pm, and including a dinner served aboard for dignitaries. The car has a plaque inside it, as well as the car name painted on the exterior.....

THE BLACK HAWK will be discontinued this fall for certain, Amtrak said, most likely on Oct 1. The PRAIRIE MARKSMAN is also in trouble, with ridership not up to par. The Decatur train, however, is reported doing very well, with an average ridership of about 108 per day in its first month of operation.....

OCTOBER 25 SCHEDULE changes will see the SAN JOAQUINS running 35 minutes faster each direction. Oakland departures will be at 8am and 4:45pm, while Bakersfield departures will be at 6:30am and 4:20pm. SAN JOAQUIN ridership in June was reportedly about 17,930, while July figures, when finally available, are expected to be around 20,000--the highest ever. The southbound COAST STARLIGHT will run 25mins earlier over its entire route beginning in October.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING in late September will be held in Chicago, in conjunction with an Association of American Railroads meeting.....

MODIFIED DINING SERVICE was not put on the COAST STARLIGHT Aug 15, as had been previously announced; an Amtrak spokesman said it would not go on until "October 1, at least." The EMPIRE BUILDER likewise is still operating with traditional dining car service, at least until October.....

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THE FEDERAL BUDGET, including the Amtrak budget, was finally signed into law by President Reagan on Aug 13--just for the record.....

ONE SUPERLINER SLEEPER has showerheads installed in the deluxe bedrooms, and operating. We don't know which car it is, however. They are in as a test, and the remaining cars won't get them until they are sent to Beech Grove for their periodic major servicing.....

SANTA FE FORGOT, apparently, to refuel the SAN JOAQUIN, train 709, in Bakersfield on Aug 4, and the train ran out of fuel at Escalon, resulting in a 2-hour delay. Passengers connecting to the COAST STARLIGHT missed it, and 15-20 of them were put up in hotels at Amtrak's expense. Amtrak could have made the connection by sending the Sacramento-Stockton dedicated bus to Escalon, and the bus could have met train 14 in Davis. Incidentally, the dedicated buses of the SAN JOAQUIN are doing very well. On Aug 4 train 708 to L.A. had 99 passengers transferring, requiring three buses. It's been averaging 50-70 passengers a day each way during daylight hours, and 3-15 persons on the night buses. The air controllers strike is partly responsible for this good patronage. Extension of the SAN JOAQUINS to L.A. appears to be a long way off; Amtrak is currently opposed to the idea, and Caltrans seems lukewarm.....

WEALTHY JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN-PHILANTHROPIST Ryoichi Sasakawa will pay up to $5 million to allow Amtrak to study the feasibility of placing bullet train service on three U.S. corridors: Los Angeles-San Diego, Miami-Tampa, Dallas-Houston, and Chicago-Detroit. The announcement came as Amtrak president Alan Boyd met with Mr. Sasakawa in San Francisco on Aug 7 to finalize the deal. Amtrak had held discussions with the Japanese National Railways for 18 months. The 81-year old philanthropist will give the money to the Japanese National Railways to do the evaluation work for Amtrak, starting with the L.A.-San Diego corridor. The idea is to consider a completely new right-of-way for the Japanese-type trains. Mr. Sasakawa, a well-known and controversial figure in Japan, was the subject of a character sketch in the Wall Street Journal on Aug 18. (Japan's Bullet Trains were the subject of a color photographic essay in Science 81 magazine (Jul/Aug)...

AMTRAK'S ALBANY-RENSSELAER station will have an open house on Sep 26 to dedicate it and inaugurate service. It's located about 50 feet south of the old station...

AMTRAK ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE #975 was a surprise visitor to Chicago on Aug 4, arriving as the trailing unit on the CARDINAL, train 51. The engine was then placed on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED (see Cars & Consists, p. 21).....

A BROADWAY LIMITED sleeping car porter at Chicago one day this month commented on Amtrak airline-type food as follows: "When the coach and sleeping car attendants start brown-bagging it, Amtrak food speaks for itself".....

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OHIO RAIL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY used its acquisition powers for the first time Aug 14 when it purchased 30 miles of double track railroad between Lima and Glenmore OH from the Erie-Lackawanna Railway for $3.8 million (funds from FRA and the state). The line is operated by the Spencerville-Elgin RR, which has the right of purchasing the line from ORTA. On Aug 5 ORTA received approval of $912,734 in FRA grants. $100,000 of that amount is to develop the 1982 Rail Ohio Plan for study of state acquisition of rail lines. The rest is for rehabilitation on the Toledo Terminal RR Company. In other ORTA news, Tom Pulsifer of Xenia OH was recently elected secretary of the newly-organized 5-state high speed rail passenger advisory council (the five states being Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana). Pulsifer is president of the Ohio Ass'n of RR Passengers and is a former chairman of ORTA.....

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, was delayed leaving Chicago several hours on Aug 4 after a broken wheel was discovered on the train while it was loading.....

THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR was disrupted early on Aug 22 when a southbound Conrail freight derailed near Wallingford CT. Amtrak bused passengers between New Haven and Wallingford, and detoured the MONTREALER thru Devon. Conrail commuter service was disrupted for about 24 hours between Hartford and New Haven.....

CITIZENS FOR RAIL CALIFORNIA is urging the passage of Assembly bill 1010, which has passed the Assembly and should be voted upon by the State Senate by Sep 15. The bill is described as landmark rail passenger legislation. Among other features, the bill requires that Caltrans prepare a 5-year plan for rail development and that the Cal. Transportation Commission include a rail program in its 5-year transportation improvement program.....

METROLINER SERVICE WAITING LOUNGES are being opened at Washington, Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore, Amtrak said in an Aug 8 press release.....

AMTRAK, ICG AND ILLINOIS DOT this month agreed to build a platform at Normal IL, close to Bloomington, for future train service there.....

News in this issue is updated thru August 23, 1981.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Chessie Safety Express fall schedule: Sep 12, Cumberland-Terra Alta WV RT; 9/13, Cumberland-Somerset PA RT; 9/19, Cumberland-Brunswick MD OW; 9/20, SilverSpring MD-Philadelphia RT; 9/26, Baltimore-Harpers Ferry & Martinsburg WV (Old Main Line) RT; 9/27, same via Silver Spring; 10/3, same, Old Main Line going & Silver Spring return; 10/4, Baltimore-Richmond OW; 10/10, Richmond-Balcony Falls VA RT; 10/11, same; 10/16, Newport News-Richmond (C&O Centennial & Yorktown Bicentennial celebration) RT; 10/24, 25, 31, 11/1, Huntington-Hinton WV RT each day. Info from Safety Express, Box CJ, 2 N. Charles St, Baltimore MD 21201.

Oct 3: Fall foliage excursion, Boston-North Adams MA & Mechanicville NY via B&M's Fitchburg Division. Over 100mis of freight-only line, & famous Hoosac Tunnel. Trip Committee, Massachusetts Bay RR Enthusiasts, Box 136, Ward Hill MA 01830.

Sep 25-Oct 3: Annual convention of Association of Railway Museums. Optional tours, San Francisco Bay cruise, PCC Streetcar excursion, dinner at Calif. Railway Museum. Bay Area Electric RR Association, Box 3694, San Francisco CA 94119.

Sep 19 & 22: departures of 23-day escorted Canadian Color Holiday tour across Canada, starting with Vancouver; by air, rail, motor coach & ship. 16th annual tour. Great Western Tours, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco CA 94105.

Sep 5: Fall riverboat season opens; ea. Sat. thru Nov, ship lvs San Francisco at 9am to Sacramento; ea. Sun. does reverse run on Sacramento River and Delta. Delta Travel, 1540 West Capitol Ave, PO Box 813, West Sacramento CA 95691.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Kansas City Aug 6: engines 250 (F40), 622 (SDP), 285 (F40), 975 (E60, off train 51 of Aug 4 at Chicago); cars 1265, 1251, Hi-level 39908, Superliner 31026, Hi-level 39949, Superliner 34082, Hi-level 39956, Superliners 33024, 38029, 32034, 32051, deadhead buffer car 10610, private car "Silver Foot" off at K.C. Same, train 4, Aug 11: engines 231, 287 (F40s), 633 (SDP); cars 1127, 1132, Hi-level 39915, Superliner 31009, Hi-level 39940, Superliner 34095, Hi-level 39942, Superliners 33015, 38016, 32041, 32065, private cars "City of Industry" (lounge), "City of Pasadena (lounge-obs-sleeper), owned by Casablanca Fan Co.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Aug 2: engines 221, 253; cars 1214, Hi-level 39912, Superliners 31027, 31000, 34077, 34002, 34014, 33019, 38035, 32018, 32040.

*DESERT WIND, train 36, Los Angeles Aug 3: engines 526, 237; cars 1232, Hi-level 39916, Superliners 38035, 34052, 34032, 32013 (diner also used as lounge).

*PIONEER, train 25, Salt Lake City Aug 4: engine 206; cars 2993 "Pine Gorge", Amdinette 20212, Hi-level 39931, 31002 Superliner, Superliner 34079 added at Ogden from train 5.

*CARDINAL, train 50, Cincinnati Aug 10: engine 249; cars 1216, 1359, 2990 "Joseph V. MacDonald", 20210, 21057, 21861, 21844, 21843, Chessie business car 15.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 49, New York Aug 5: engine 957 (E60); cars 8506, 4718, 4703, 2081, 2923 "Pacific Palisade", 2980 "Pine Creek", 1611, 1127, 1128.

*CRESCENT, train 19, Slidell LA Aug 6: engines 275, 277; cars 1237, 1350, 1255, 1624, 8514, 4626, 4738, 4727, 4734, 4621, 4728, 4735, 4739, 3106, 8510, 2431, 2443 "Walnut Grove", 2900 "Pacific Bay", private car 9301 "Silver Vista."

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, Lafayette LA Aug 2: engines 712, 707 (P30s); cars 1213, Hi-level 39928, Superliner 31007, Hi-level 39953, Superliners 34076, 33020, 38036, 32043, 32014.

*SAN DIEGAN, train 577, San Diego Aug 1: engine 220; cars 21262, 21263, 20053 Amcafe, 21253, 21258. Train 574, Los Angeles Aug 1: engines 214, 250; cars 21251, 21261, 20049 Amcafe, 21264, 21186, 21182, 20041 Amcafe, 21180. Train 583, San Diego Aug 1: engines 222, 250; cars 21250, 21268, 20051 Amcafe, 21185, 21270, 21187, 21265, 20041 Amcafe, 21180.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, Toledo Aug 10: engines 341, 291; cars 1614, 2050, 2920 "Pacific Mist", 2444 "Magnolia Grove", 4636, 4616, 4615, 4004, 3124, 8501, 4001, 4610, 4602, 2992, 1168. Train 448, Boston Aug 6: engine 338; cars 3123 "General Lafayette", 4608, 4607, 4003, 4002, 4613, 2441, 1171 "Silver Coyote", 1162.

*LAKE CITIES, train 352, Toledo Aug 10: engine 261; cars 21238, 21113, 21247, 20232.

*Special "hospital train" for deadhead cars Topeka-Beech Grove via KCY (MoPac) and STL (Conrail) Aug 17 (depart Topeka--ATSF--8am): engine 284; cars 9974, 1070, 9943, 9941, 9973, 9922, 9981, 9985, 9900, 9980, 9982, 21028, 3404.

*ANN RUTLEDGE, train 304, Kansas City Aug 7: engine 316; cars 20231, 21206, 21219, 21116, MoPac business car 8.

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Attention Amtrak, Caltrans, and other interested parties: the new overnight train from L.A. to the Bay Area should be named the "Coast Starlight". The present daytime train there would then be named the "Coast Daylight". Thus we would have a parallel name structure that more accurately describes the time of passage along the scenic highlight of the trip. It makes no sense to have today's "Coast Starlight" pass the coastline in the day! Let's wake up and get this right. We also need paralleling name structure much like on the east coast, where the Florida trains are parallel-named "Silver Star" and "Silver Meteor". Having dissimilar names (such as the suggested "Californian", "Cat", or even the hallowed "Lark") will confuse the traveling public, and besides, I for one would like to see the "Coast Daylight" name back in the timetable. Let's hear it for sensible train naming. Paul Halbach, P.O. Box 26110, Los Angeles CA 90026.

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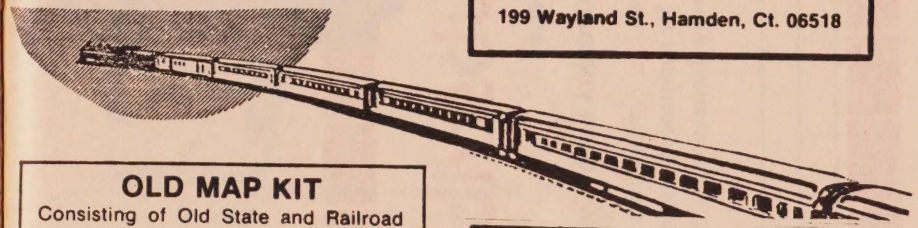

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